

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 00075 071631Z

46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCEM-02 NEA-10 AGR-20 CEA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4103

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FOR USEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR TS

SUBJECT: MASMOUDI COMMENTS ON ARAB-AFRICAN AND AFRICAN-
EUROPEAN COOPERATION

1. DURING CONVERSATION JAN 4 (REPORTED SEPTELS) FON
MIN MOHAMED MASMOUDI COMMENTED ON GROWING ARAB-AFRICAN
COOPERATION FOLLOWING ARAB SUMMIT IN ALGIERS. MASMOUDI
HAD ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA ON PART OF HIS TWO-
WEEK TRIP IN DECEMBER TO SEVERAL AFRICAN CAPITALS.
MASMOUDI SAID ARABS WERE ENCOURAGED BY OWN COOPERATION
AND SOLIDARITY ON PETROLEUM QUESTION AND WERE THINKING
OF WAYS TO EXTEND THIS TYPE OF COOPERATION INTO AFRICA
WHICH PRODUCES NUMBER OF RAW MATERIALS SUCH AS IRON,
COPPER AND ALUMINUM. DURING VISIT TO ZAIRE, TUNISIANS
HAD DISCUSSED POSSIBLE ARAB CONSORTIUM INVESTMENT IN
COPPER REFINERY. MASMOUDI SAID THIS WAS ALTERNATIVE
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 00075 071631Z

TO PROPOSAL BY EGYPTIAN BANK TO FINANCE SPECULATIVE

STOCKPILING OF COPPER IN ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE TO FORCE
WORLD PRICE OF COPPER TO RISE SIMILAR TO RECENT OIL
PRICE INCREASES. MASMOUDI SAID GOT DELEGATION DIS-
COURAGED GOZ ADVISORS FROM ENTERING INTO SUCH A SCHEME
BUT PROPOSED FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR REFINERY AS LONG-
RANGE ALTERNATIVE. HE DID NOT SAY WHICH ARAB COUNTRIES
MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN THIS VENTURE. HE SAID SIMILAR
JOINT ARAB-AFRICAN PROJECTS MIGHT BE WORKED OUT FOR
MOURITANIAN IRON ORE AND ALUMINUM PROCESSING IN GUINEA.

2. MASMOUDI SAID AFRICAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH
EUROPE WAS UNDERGOING CHANGE AS RESULT OF DECISION
AT ADDIS ABABA FOR ALL 41 STATES ASSOCIATED WITH EEC
TO HARMONIZE THEIR AGREEMENTS SO THAT ALL STATES WOULD
NEGOTIATE ON SAME FOOTING AND SAME TERMS IN RENEWING
AGREEMENT WITH EEC. HE SAID THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT
THAT REVERSE PREFERENCES WILL NOT BE GRANTED TO EEC
COUNTRIES.

3. COMMENT: MASMOUDI IS NOT WELL VERSED IN ECONOMICS
AND HAS NEVER DISPLAYED MUCH INTEREST IN ECONOMIC
QUESTIONS. HOWEVER, HE NOW MAY SEE TUNISIA IN ROLE
OF "HONEST BROKER" IN PROMOTING ARAB-AFRICAN ECONOMIC
COOPERATION, WITH TUNISIAN TECHNICIANS AND ADVISORS
TRYING TO SELL WEALTHY ARAB STATES ON INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES IN ORE-RICH AFRICAN STATES.
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